



What do you know about “Blended Learning”?

Blended Learning Method: Bringing Ukrainian Language Learning and Teaching to a New Level

3 October 2014—As a leading centre in Ukrainian education, the Ukrainian Language Education Centre (ULEC) seeks to benefit from the latest teaching methods and new technology in order to serve most effectively learners' needs in today's rapidly changing environment. One of the Centre's priorities is a project on blended learning method in Ukrainian language teaching which combines traditional in-class instruction with online study.

Starting in January 2014, the ULEC research team headed by Dr. Alla Nedashkivska, ULEC acting director and associate professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies, University of Alberta, and two graduate students, Olena Sivachenko and Oksana Perets, began developing modules for a blended-learning method of delivery for the Beginners' Ukrainian course.

Dr. Nedashkivska notes that “the realization of this project will allow students to have two hours of independent online study, in addition to three in-class hours of instruction per week.” These two online hours include a variety of authentic texts, interactive exercises and activities that are developed for reading, listening, comprehension, and speaking activities, as well as assessment (quizzes and tests) and reference (glossary) tools, which students will use either under an instructor's supervision or on their own. The online segment is based on the topics currently taught at the beginners' level and will necessarily include a selection of authentic materials, which will allow students to experience native-like environments of the target language and culture. The computer-mediated tasks are learner-centered, exposing students to a variety of tasks and interactional contexts, simulated via visual and linguistic input.

Dr. Nedashkivska points out that the blended learning project is important in several respects. “First, in the Beginners' Ukrainian language classroom, there are no formal online teaching materials for communicative and task-based language learning. Second, the development of digital materials designed around authentic texts is a major asset in preparing our students to become more familiar with modern-day Ukraine and learning the intricacies of today's language. Third, the creation of electronic resource materials is a great asset to the growing field of computer-assisted instruction of foreign languages in general, which has been shown to increase learners' motivation, self-practice and greater engagement with the authentic cultural and linguistic input.”

The newly developed blended-learning course will be initially offered to students taking UKR 111-112 at the U of A, with the potential to make it available to other institutions. The course itself is designed for students with little or no background in Ukrainian, emphasizing oral communication while developing basic listening, reading and writing skills, as well as cultural knowledge ([details about the course](#)).

The research team has already completed the course design planning stage and began working on resources production for each module of the course, as well as its online component. Specifically, they have created a series of learning materials, teaching and learning activities, as well as assignment and assessment resources. They are now seeking funding for the next stage of the project, mainly, the creation of the online modules, as well as supplementary appendices, glossary, and index.

The ULEC research team presented its recent findings at the second national conference of Ukrainian Teachers of Canada (Edmonton, 2-4 May) by organizing a panel on “Digital Technologies, Blended-Learning, and Student Motivation: Ukrainian at the Post-Secondary Level.”

If you would like to donate towards this project or ULEC’s other projects that support Ukrainian language education, please contact [Mykola Soroka](#), CIUS Development Coordinator, phone: (780) 492-6847, or [give online](#). For more information on the blended-learning project, please contact [Dr. Nedashkivska](#).

Foto: (1) Sample of an e-lesson; (2) The main character of the lesson Oksana.

The Ukrainian Language Education Centre promotes and develops Ukrainian language education in Canada and abroad by: supporting bilingual programs and professional development of Ukrainian-language teachers and instructors; creating learning and teaching resources at both the secondary and post-secondary levels; conducting research on topics related to Ukrainian-language education and related fields; and fostering international links and community engagement. If you would like more information on the Centre, please visit our [website](#), [Facebook](#) page or contact by [e-mail](#).

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